

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**



<b>1</b>	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>2</b>	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>3</b>	<b>Final Award</b>	MA
<b>4</b>	<b>Programme Title</b>	Human Geography Research
<b>5</b>	<b>UCAS/Programme Code</b>	4025 F/P
<b>6</b>	<b>Programme Accreditation</b>	N/A
<b>7</b>	<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	N/A
<b>8</b>	<b>FHEQ Level</b>	Level 7
<b>9</b>	<b>Last updated</b>	July 2021

**10 Programme Aims**

1. To meet the aims of the ESRC's postgraduate training guidelines by providing high quality research training at Masters Level.
2. To provide learning opportunities to enable graduates to acquire the knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes necessary to undertake advanced research in the social sciences in general and in human geography in particular.
3. To contribute to the University's objectives by providing high quality research training to an increasing number of postgraduates and enhancing their key skills and employability.
4. To produce graduates who can proceed to careers in research in universities, the public sector, the voluntary sector or the private sector.
5. To provide a qualification which fully meets the learning outcomes at Level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualification.
6. To comply with prevailing University policies and QAA codes of practice.

**11 Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Geography

**Knowledge and Understanding**

On completing the programme students should have:

**A General research skills**

**A1 Bibliographic and Computing Skills**

- (i) The skills to identify and retrieve relevant materials relating to research, including annals, books, journals, theses, conference proceedings and resources available electronically and on the world-wide web.
- (ii) The skills to maintain a personal research bibliography and use EndNote.
- (iii) IT skills, comprising word processing and other basic computing skills, including spreadsheets and database management, SPSS, NUDIST and PowerPoint.
- (iv) Evaluation procedure skills for undertaking book reviews, literature reviews and dissertations.

**A2 Ethical Issues**

- (i) A knowledge and understanding of matters relating to privacy and confidentiality in research.
- (ii) An awareness of the political context of research.

- (iii) An awareness of professional codes of practice.
- (iv) A knowledge and understanding of the power relations inherent in research field work.
- (v) An awareness of the ethical responsibilities that a researcher has towards the researched.

### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

#### **Teaching strategy**

Bibliographic and Computing Skills (A1 i-ii) are taught through workshops and practical classes in the Information Skills module. A1 (iii) IT skills are taught in a variety of Stage 1 modules through a combination of workshops, practical classes, tutorials and lectures. Evaluation procedure skills (A1 (iv)) are taught through student seminars and student exercises and are included in the Dissertation Preparation.

Ethical issues (A2 i-v) are taught by lectures and workshops on Thinking about Research and Qualitative Methodology.

#### **Learning strategy**

Students learn bibliographical skills (A1 i - ii) by developing an initial (and final) bibliography for their Research Dissertation. IT Skills (A1iii) are learnt through a series of workshops, data practicals, the production of a Powerpoint presentation and completion of the Research Dissertation. Evaluation procedures (A1 iv) are practiced in seminars dedicated to analysis of material pertaining to 'landmark books/debates' and teamwork exercises and presentations linked to key stages in a MA dissertation.

Students acquire knowledge of ethical issues (A2 i-v) through teamwork exercises and presentations, case studies and independent reading.

### **Assessment Strategy**

General research skills are assessed by means of a range of coursework and, ultimately, the Research Dissertation. Assessment for the Information Skills Module requires the construction of a bibliography, incorporating bibliographic search strategies and professional design and layout. IT skills are assessed by the bibliographic exercise, data practicals in the Quantitative Methodology module and the through the delivery of Powerpoint presentations. Ethical issues are assessed as part of critical methodological reviews and essays.

### **Intellectual Skills**

The programme will enable the student to acquire, develop and demonstrate the following intellectual skills:

#### **B Training in Research Methods**

##### **B1 Principles**

- (i) An ability to define and formulate research problems, questions and hypotheses.
- (ii) An understanding of the rationale for research methods, and the ability to select and evaluate appropriate research methods.
- (iii) An understanding of sampling, sampling error, and biases in results.
- (iv) An understanding of, and ability to apply, concepts of generalisability, validity, reliability and replicability.

##### **B2 Data collection and analysis**

- (i) A knowledge and understanding of the application of selected methods of data collection.
- (ii) An understanding of strengths and weaknesses of different types of data and the development of a critical approach to the use of different data sources.
- (iii) An understanding of the use of research methods and tools to analyse data.
- (iv) Proficiency in a range of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques.

## Teaching and Learning Methods

### **Teaching strategy**

B1 (i) and (ii) are delivered through the introduction to research and dissertation modules in Stage 1. B1 (iii) and (iv) and teaching for B2 (i-iv) are principally delivered through the Introduction to Quantitative and Qualitative Methods modules. B2 (i-ii) is also covered in the Stage 1 GEO modules.

The teaching strategy for B1 (i-iv) is a combination of lectures, workshops, research seminars and both discipline specific and multi-disciplinary teamwork. The teaching strategy for B2 (i - iv) is a combination of lectures, workshops, teaching and research seminars and data analysis practicals.

### **Learning strategy**

For B1 (i - ii) students learn through team-based problem solving exercises, the individual preparation of a research proposal and attendance at research seminars. B1 (iii-iv) is learnt through research seminars, workshops and data practicals. For B2 (i - iv) students learn principally through data practicals and attendance at research seminars. Overall, all B1 and B2 are undertaken through the completion of the Research Dissertation.

## Assessment Strategy

B1 and B2 are assessed through the production and presentation of a Research Proposal in the Dissertation Preparation module, the completion of a series of data practicals, the production of a critical methodological review and a group report and presentation.

## Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should have received instruction in, and be able to demonstrate proficiency in the following practical skills.

### **C Subject-related outcomes**

- C1 Understanding of a range of philosophical, epistemological and theoretical social science debates within human geography.
- C2 Understanding of a range of key concepts and theoretical issues in human geography.
- C3 Knowledge of the distinctive contribution of human geography to the social sciences.
- C4 Recognition of the roles and relevance of geography and geographers within the public arena.
- C5 Understanding of a range of quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting, and sources of, data and evidence for geographical enquiry.
- C6 Understanding of a range of quantitative and qualitative methods of analysing and interpreting evidence as part of geographical enquiry.

## Teaching and Learning Methods

### **Teaching strategy**

C1 and C3 are delivered principally in the GEO modules and are elements of the combination of discipline and multi-disciplinary student exercises undertaken in HSS modules. C2 and C4 are delivered through the GEO modules Teaching for C5 and C6 takes place predominantly in HSS modules

### **Learning strategy**

C1 and C3 are learnt through teaching seminars and through participation in Geography discipline area research seminars and dedicated dissertation workshops. In the HSS modules, C1 and C3 are practiced in team exercises and presentations and in a mixture of disciplinary and multi-disciplinary groups. C2 and C4 are learnt through lectures, teaching seminars and through solo student presentations in the GEO modules. C4 is learnt through sessions on human geography and academic praxis. Additionally, C2 and C4 are learnt through participation in research seminars and dissertation workshops in Doing Geographical Research. C5 and C6 are learnt through lectures, data practicals and workshops on the Introduction to Quantitative

Methods and Qualitative Methods modules, including discipline-specific workshops and curriculum streams.

The Information Skills module includes workshops on data sources and the availability of individual assistance for postgraduate students through a one-to-one tutorial with the relevant Liaison Librarian to discuss specialist information needs. Additionally, C5 and C6 are learnt through participation in Geography discipline area research seminars and dissertation workshops.

### **Assessment Strategy**

C1, C2, C3, C5 and C6 are jointly assessed in the production and presentation of a research proposal during dissertation preparation and the research dissertation itself. C1 and C3 are assessed through the completion of an extended essay based on extensive reading for Philosophies in Human Geography. C2 is assessed through a 15-minute student presentation and an extended essay in the Human Geography module. C4 is not directly assessed. C5 and C6 are assessed through data practicals, a critical methodological review and presentation of a research proposal for the dissertation preparation and the modules on qualitative and quantitative methodology.

### **Transferable/Key Skills**

On completing the programme students should have acquired and should be able to demonstrate competence in the following key skills.

#### **D Key skills**

- D1 The skills to disseminate research findings effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- D2 The skills of effective written communication and presentation.
- D3 The skills to manage research, including writing proposals, planning the research project, and implement the research and complete it on time.
- D4 The skills to work effectively as a member of a team that is both subject specific and multi-disciplinary.

### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

#### **Teaching strategy**

D1 is taught across a number of HSS and GEO modules. D2 is taught through a range of written assessments and presentations across all modules. D3 is a major component of the HSS modules and Geographical Research module. Team-working (D4) takes place across a number of modules (subject specific and multi-disciplinary) in a variety of exercises, particularly the modules on Thinking and Research and Doing Geographical Research.

#### **Learning strategy**

Students learn a variety of dissemination skills (D1) through, for example, an introduction to the REGARD database, individual and team presentations and document production (subject specific and multi-disciplinary), PowerPoint presentations to external peers, production of a student presentation around a chosen concept in the Human Geography module and the 'Pick-A-Text' component of Philosophies in Geography module. Many of these activities develop D2 (skills of effective written communication and presentation) over and above the range of written assessments produced and culminating in the Research Dissertation. D3 is developed explicitly through the production of research proposals and the completion of a Research Dissertation inclusive of dissertation workshops and individual meetings with supervisors. D4 is learnt throughout the course in a number of contexts including lectures, teaching seminars, workshops, problem-solving exercises and presentations.

## Assessment Strategy

D1 is assessed through a PowerPoint presentation of the Research Dissertation and in oral presentations on a geographical concept. The latter presentations is team-based and assess D4, as does a group-based report delivered in Semester 1. D2 (written communication) is assessed through the variety of written coursework submitted across all the modules. D3 is assessed in the Dissertation Preparation and introduction to research modules as students progress through an iterative process of writing their research proposal.

## 12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

### Basic structure of the programme

One year full time or two years part time  
180 credits (120 coursework, 60 dissertation)  
180 credits compulsory (4 x 10 credits modules, 4 x 20 credits modules and 1 x 60 credit dissertation)

### Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

The programme follows the ESRC's 2005 *Postgraduate Training Guidelines*, and ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2009 and thus accords with the requirements for generic and subject-specific research training required of any ESRC-recognised Research Training Masters programme.

### Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[4025 Regulations 21-22](#)

## 13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

[https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh\\_progspec\\_generic\\_info.pdf](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf)

### *Induction*

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principal support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. Induction sessions are held both in Geography for the GEO modules and by the postgraduate training team in the HASS faculty for HSS modules. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures and seminars. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

## 14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

[https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh\\_progspec\\_generic\\_info.pdf](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf)

### Accreditation reports

N/A

### Additional mechanisms

N/A

## 15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

[https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh\\_progspec\\_generic\\_info.pdf](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf)

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>)

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/> )

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.